

**HB 820**

**Testimony – March 30, 2007  
Jani McCall**

**Billings Clinic &  
The Montana Children's Initiative Provider Association**

Madam Chair and Committee Members, for the record, my name is Jani McCall and I am here today representing Billings Clinic and the Montana Children's Initiative Provider Association.

We come in strong support of HB 820 including the recommendations of the Health and Human Services Appropriations Subcommittee.

Several amendments to make cuts to the budget recommendations have been identified. We urge you not to accept those amendments.

I will speak to two of these amendments.

The Subcommittee worked hard to craft a fairly comprehensive package for adult mental health community based services. This is a system badly in need of funding and your support.

The Subcommittee also included a 2.5% rate increase for providers each year of the biennium.

There is an amendment to delay implementation of the rate increase. This sounds somewhat benign but it is very serious.

Providers are where "the rubber meets the road". This is where consumers and patients are care for and treated. This delay results in only a 1.9% rate increase in Year One of the Biennium and a 1.2% rate increase in Year Two of the Biennium.

The Legislature addresses inflation by adding funding into the base for many services provided by the State. However, private providers traditionally have had to fight for minimal rate increases that often do not begin to keep up with the rate of inflation.